

Mayer (E. R.)

WITH COMPLIMENTS OF THE WRITER.

THE
NOW AND THEN OF MEDICINE:
A POST-PRANDIAL DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE FORMATION OF THE

Luzerne County Medical Society,

—AT—

WILKES-BARRE, PENN'A, JANUARY 13th, 1886.

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THE NOW AND THEN OF MEDICINE.

"*Dulce est desipere in loco.*" It is wise, as well as pleasant, for the "insatiate archer" in the battle of life to relax occasionally his oft drawn bow from its wonted tension and to let the slacked string vibrate in a manner attuned to mirth, and more melodiously than when it is strained in rigid readiness for work of offence or defence.

The members of our profession have many a solace and recompense, chiefly derived from the appreciation of their conscientious labors and from the affection and devotion of their clients. But, at the best, "the lines are not fallen to us in pleasant places." All our paths are not those of peace; all our beds not those of roses. Most of us pass our lives, from the diploma to the death-bed, in undergoing trying ordeals, amidst "morns of toil and nights of waking." The introduction to our profession, from the rudiments on, has only been accomplished through constant and patient labor in the dissecting room, the obstetric chamber, the laboratory, the lecture hall, and in the exhausting nocturnal study of a half dozen sciences. The threshold once passed, then commences a life time of struggle, activity, nightly and daily toil; of self-sacrifice and devotion; of slavery to the demands, and often to the whims, of the public; of acquaintance with misery and poverty; of calls upon our sympathy and confidence; of exposure to tempest, cold and heat, to fatigues, vicissitudes of fortune, alternate hopes and fears, and often to indignities almost past endurance. We are probably more liable than other men to "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," and "the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to," but, in addition, are more often the objects of improper censure, invidious comment, and libelous accusations. More frequently than others are we placed in positions which invite from male and female "fellows of the baser sort" attacks upon our character—and to cap the climax of our insecurity, unfounded suits for malpractice, and attempts to blackmail, such as some of the best of us here to-night have experienced.

Our lives are thus, in the main, painted with sombre tints, if illumined by occasional hues of radiant coloring. Fortunately, however, the practitioner who is seasoned to his work, who bears about with him the talisman of rectitude of purpose, and who knows how to enliven his all-absorbing duties with incidental distractions, does learn to formalize the lessons of his daily life into a philosophic method, which, in spite of carking cares, enables him to present to the world the aspect of serenity and

cheerfulness, and often to obtain for him their reality as well as semblance. If for no other reason, he is too busy a man to be despondent or melancholy, and loving his profession for its own sake, as he should to be worthy of it, he bears his burdens to the end, without complaint or protest.

To aid him in securing that contented spirit which it is important he should sustain through life, it is well, not that he dissipate by luxury, licence, or revel, but that he spend some of his leisure and some of his fees, "those sweeteners of toil," in obtaining amusement and social pleasure. How can he better accomplish this than by an occasional union with those of his own guild in a fraternal and convivial symposium? This we are wisely and happily doing to-night. "Far from the madding crowd" of patients, we who have been able to escape for the nonce from the "damnable iteration" of the night bell and the frantic telephone, fellows in joy and suffering, in toil and vigils, now for a brief season of rest, play at being sharers in each other's sympathy, mirth and even folly. Let us do this often!

Some one has written that "a dinner lubricates business." Certainly such a dinner as we are enjoying to-night is calculated to oil the machinery of our daily life, and to lessen the friction of its jarring cogs and wheels. It has been, as it should be, hilarious and convivial, a joyful rest from weariness, a fruitful occasion for interchange of thought, and a rebinding of the ties which unite us. It should enable us to return to our work with renewed vigor, after a brief contact with those material pleasures which are more "of the earth earthy" than our usual fare.

The gastronomic advantages of a good dinner are by no means to be despised. Who would not rather titillate his palate with the luxuries devised by modern culinary science, and enjoy with skilled relish the fragrant succulence of *filet de bœuf* and *croquettes de volailles* than surfeit upon the coarse and hearty viands which made the banquet of our ancestors a rude debauch? The boar's head, the baron of beef, the pork pies, the great puddings, and huge haggis, such as Dr. Radcliffe feasted the Prince Eugene of Savoy with, have now given place to such esculent dainties as our host of the Valley House has set before us to-night.

It may not be out of place, in this connection, to state that it is not generally known how much our improved cookery is indebted to medicine. In ancient times cookery was considered an important part of the healing art, and the word "*curare*," among the Romans, signified to dress a dinner as well as to cure a disease. Sir Theodore de Mayerne, called by some the second Hippocrates and the physician of four kings, wrote, in the seventeenth century, the best cookery book of the period. Doctors Hunter and Hill, in the eighteenth, and Kitchener, in the nine-

teenth century, gave to the world the best cookery books of their eras. In the present time, the selection of nutritious and palatable dishes is largely due to the skillful direction of accomplished physicians.

This very desultory address was commenced with the intention of dealing with the relations, physical and psychic, of the *Now* and the *Then* in medical matters, and seems to have diverted in the direction of things gustatory more than is consistent with the dignity of the subject. Having long since sent off the bones of the *cotelettes de mouton*, let us return now to our other *muttons*, and indulge in a glimpse at the professional and social lives of the doctors of yore, and contrast them with those of our own times and cloth.

The immense difference between the habits and sentiments of this and of the previous centuries, including the eighteenth, seems like a wide ocean dividing continents. One can perhaps imagine a courtly physician visiting his patients, with a sword instead of a catlin or lancet by his side, but is shocked to hear of two medical men of high standing drawing their swords upon each other and fighting like bravoës in the open street. Yet such a duello actually took place between the great Dr. Mead and Dr. Woodward, in the streets of London. The latter, slipping, fell, and Mead called upon him to submit and beg his life. "Not until I am your patient," aptly replied the other. The great Harvey was said to have been in his angry moments as ready to let out the blood, the circulation of which he had discovered, with his dagger as with his lancet; and even in later times the personal conflicts between doctors were often savage and sanguinary. Most of the great doctors in England, during the reigns of the two Charleses and of Anne, were gallants, roysterers and *bon-vivants*. They drank hard, entertained liberally, and their dinners and suppers were debauches. The bottle and the board were then the doctors' favorite companions, and many a physician died from his devotion to them. They not only practiced, but prescribed voracious feeding and heavy drinking, and some of them dispensed and sold both liquors and tobacco. Many of them received their patients and the apothecaries who came to consult them in taverns, and prescribed over their wine and pipes. The celebrated Dr. Freind continually visited his patients when intoxicated, and once, when entering the chamber of a duchess, was so confused as only to be able to exclaim, "Drunk, by God!" The patient, who happened to be in the same condition with the doctor, thinking he had divined her malady, sent him a huge fee to keep her secret, and became his most liberal patroness. Radcliffe was a confirmed drunkard; and Sir Richard Jebb, Beauford, Fordyce and Sheldon were not much better.

That in the profession, in those early days, there was devotion to such science as was attainable, brilliancy of intellect and aspiration for better things, is amply testified by the mere mention of the names of Sir Thomas Browne, Mayerne, Harvey, Sydenham, Heberden, Sir Hans Sloane, and a host of others. They lived in a day when a belief in Astrology lingered, superstition prevailed, true science had made no progress, and the mental atmosphere of the times, in spite of its partial impregnation with the aroma of the principles of Baconian induction, and of Newton's discoveries in physical science, was not favorable to true research or logical deduction. Let us take a leaf from the proceedings of the Royal Society of England, in the days of Sir Hans Sloane, only one hundred and thirty-two years ago, and see how feebly the first steps of the society in the direction of Natural History compare with the strides that body and others like it are now making :

"June 5.—Magneticall cures were then discoursed of. Sir Gilbert Talbot promised to bring what he knew of sympathetical cures. Those that had any powder of sympathy were desired to bring some of it at the next meeting.

m/ "Sir Keneline Digby related that the calcined powder of toades, reverberated, applyed in bagges upon the stomach of a pestiferate body, cures it by several applications.

"June 26.—Dr. Ente, Dr. Clarke, Dr. Goddard, and Dr. Whistler were appointed curators of the proposition made by Sir G. Talbot to torment a man presently with the sympathetic powder."

m/ Caricaturists and satirists, like Hogarth and Moliere, could not have struck the popular fancy as they did if their portrayals of classes of men had been merely travesties. It is hard to believe that the fantastic and grotesque figures capering as doctors in the sick room, in "Le Medecin Malgré lui," had their counterpart in actual life; and yet there is reason to suppose that there was a resemblance, if not a likeness. If there be anything in Voltaire's description of his countrymen, the French doctors of days earlier than his own were more likely to have had sinian, if not feline, characteristics, than our own Anglo-Saxon predecessors. Suffice it to know that the average British doctor of the seventeenth and earlier part of the eighteenth centuries was an odd figure. Portly, of sanguine hue and pompous air, ruffled and bewigged, carrying his long and big-headed cane, he was conceited, arrogant, turbulent, and derisive. Even in the latter part of the eighteenth century and the earlier part of this, the British surgeon was too apt to be of the type of the great Abernethy—blunt, coarse, and unconciliating.

"We have changed all this." The eternal laws of *development, variation of species, and survival of the fittest*, have gradu-

ally evolved from the blustering boor, the harlequin and quack of earlier times, the courteous, erudite and polished modern doctor, with his suave professional manner and carressing ways. If he have affectations and mannerisms, he is, if at all worthy of his calling, at least a gentleman, and more apt than not to be learned, sagacious, prudent, conscientious, and helpful. Considering his opportunities of licence, he is less disposed than most men to be immoral or intemperate, and, as a rule, he is more regardful of the trusts and confidences placed in his keeping than any other.

The charlatan, however, has undergone no variation of species since the days of the Troglodyte, and is yet a duck of the original anserine type, and the same melodious quack as when his congeners saved Rome. His outcries tend to destroy, not to save, those whom they awaken and alarm. If not the "fittest" of medical men, he and his type have both "survived" beyond all calculation.

The success that in every age has attended the enterprises of medical pretenders, is a laughable and yet mournful evidence of the credulity and ignorance of the generations. Invalids or hypochondriacs, ignorant of the cause of their sufferings, have gone, and still go, from one to another charlatan, giving precious gold, whether, as in early days, for charms and talismans, or, in later ones, for cordials, elixirs, blood purifiers, kidney cures, patent pills, restoratives of youth, cancer cures, and the thousand advertised and certified nostrums which have their day and sway and are then forgotten. One amusing way in which the history of quackery repeats itself is, that in the earliest times, as now, there were specialists in fraud, who won honors and pelf, not only from the vulgar, but from the eminent. Good Queen Anne had weak eyes, and went from one empiric to another for the relief they all promised her, and every fresh advertising scoundrel won her favor for a time with a new collyrium. She knighted one of these, hight William Reade, originally a botching tailor, and to the last a very ignorant knave, as his "Short and Exact Account of All the Diseases Incident to the Eyes" attests. He could neither read nor write, but dictated his absurd work to an amanuensis. Yet, after being knighted, and having put out a few hatfuls of eyes, he enjoyed the most lucrative and fashionable practice of his time. Our quack oculists, few of whom know the cornea from the iris, and none of whom can handle an ophthalmoscope, still put out eyes and deplete the pockets of the vulgar herd; but these are no days for them to be knights in, and the modern educated public shuns their doors.

A capital illustration in modern times of the readiness of the untaught rabble to accept any pretender's self estimate or adver-

tisement, was furnished lately in Sicily. Towards the decline of the cholera epidemic there, last autumn, a Dr. Riforgiato came to Palermo, announcing that he had an unfailing remedy for the disease. He was, I believe, not an inoculator, nor a disciple of Ferran. But the mob, without proof, believed his mere assertion, carried him on their shoulders to the town hall, and demanded that he should be placed in charge of the hospitals. Such was the furor in his behalf that the insurrection caused by it had to be quelled by the military. The ignorant and undeveloped public, whether of the Latin or Anglo-Saxon race, and occasionally a cultivated fraction of it, largely endowed with the bump of wonder, and disposed to accept "*omne ignotum pro mirifico*," are thus gulled and cajoled by the pretensions of the direct successors of Paracelsus and the other charlatans of old.

The empiric has gone through no process of evolution. His *selection* by his victims does not seem to us of the regular school to be at all a *natural* one. Now, as of yore, he is the vampire, sucking the life blood of his dupes, and fanning their fears and suspicions to sleep by waving in the air before them factitious advertisements and testimonials.

But, in charity, it must be admitted that quackery, or rather delusion, is not all in the hands of mere impostors. There is a large body of honest and weak enthusiasts who, by nature credulous, untrained in the logical methods of science, uninformed as to the persistent laws of nature, help to swell the list of obstinate sufferers. There are the devotees of one therapeutic method who have founded upon a few well known and isolated facts as to the specific operation upon the tissues of minute doses of some drugs, a Procrustean system, by which they either stretch or abridge all other known facts in medicine, and profess to have discovered a narrow but universal law which fits every case. Many of the supporters of this creed are honest enthusiasts. Those of them who attain to success and shekels, administer as potent pellets and potions as we do. Their following is still large, and their mode of practice so facile that their laymen and laywomen have taken it up. Here and there even one of their clerical enthusiasts will, on week days, condescend to change his austere garb for the "motley wear," and dispense to his flock, granules as well as grace. We all have in our memories the familiar figure of the officious female who goes about from house to house urging her sick neighbors to dismiss their doctor, to employ her own, or at least to substitute for their remedies the drops she carries in her case.

Then there are those sainted women, and long-haired, lank, elderly apostles, who, commencing their career at the foot of the skyward-pointing ladder as volunteer homœopathic prescribers,

have gradually climbed to the bad eminence of the arrogation of such intimacy with the Almighty Creator of the world's laws as to assert that He, overlooking the agonies of millions of His despairing creatures who are imploring His aid, will, upon the appeal of these self-constituted almoners of His bounty, immediately heal the disciples of the *Faith Cure* who come to Him through the medium of the favored few who alone have His ear. The success of these apostles is undoubtedly greater than that of their progenitors. Multitudes of apparent miracles are performed by them, in accordance with the well-known laws of "expectant attention." Cases of sympathetic epilepsy, neuralgia, hysteria, fixed joints, and even asthenopia, &c., do get well, as they oftener do under God's really appointed means. But the wonders of these Protestant miracle-mongers do not compare with the better authenticated ones of Lourdes and the chapel Knock, or with the marvels of the mind, magnetic, and spiritualistic cures performed by blasphemers and infidels.

In spite of the fruitful advances made in our era in scientific discovery, in breadth and liberty of thought, increased comfort and happiness of all classes, longer life and better health, there be pessimists who insist upon it that we are "going to the dogs." They dread the march of science, they fear that the extension of this or that form of religion, that some dreaded general unbelief in any religion, that agrarianism or socialism are about to upset the social fabric, and they sigh for the good old times, "the brave days of old," when missiles and fire-brands were used for arguments, and kingly rule and feudal tenure kept the masses in check.

For one, I rejoice that I have been permitted to live in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and to witness and share in the progress and marvels which have marked it as the best part yet of the revolving cycles.

We have much more to be thankful for than for good dinners—more universal peace, kindness, comfort, freedom, and health, than our forefathers possessed. We live in the enjoyment of the coruscation of the most wonderful discoveries of the centuries, and in the fruition of the results of mental achievements surpassing the wildest dreams of the philosophic aspirants of old. We medical men have special reason to rejoice in the knowledge that the march of the sciences involved in our own studies and calling, has been *pari passu* with the general advance.

In no other period of human history has knowledge stepped on with such tremendous strides as during the last forty years, or so many new chapters in the biography of the universe been written by philosophical speculation and experiment. The invention of printing, of the telescope and microscope, the dis-

coveries of Newton and Laplace in astronomy, of Harvey in physiology, and later of Priestly in chemistry and Franklin in electricity, magnificent achievements as these were, have been cast into the shade by the successes of the present day, of which these were the precursors. It is not yet a half century since the discovery was made of the conservation of force, and the practical identity of heat, light, magnetism, and electricity, and only a little more since Lyell first placed our geological knowledge upon a scientific basis. It is much less since the spectroscope enabled us to know the identity of the solar and stellar constituents with those of our own earth. It is needless to speak here of the wonders of the telegraph, telephone, electric illumination, and the thousand practical applications of science which have all come within a few years. But perhaps the greatest attainment of this age of ideas has been the complete revolution of human thought which has been evolved by the speculations following the announcement to the world, only twenty-six years ago, by Darwin, of the theory of natural selection. This theory, obscurely hinted at since the days of Aristotle, was originally, as to its fundamental principles, propounded by Dr. Wells and Mr. Patrick Matthew, who, however, failed to see its wide application, and by Alfred Russell Wallace, who took in its scope, but modestly surrendered the right to expand it to the majestic genius of Darwin. By the latter the principles of the origin of species, or "natural selection," as he preferred to call it, the variation of types and the survival of the fittest have been so elaborated and confirmed by experiment, analogy, and proof, that in the region of natural history little scarcely seems left to be completed. Huxley and Tyndall have still further extended these researches, and the immortal Herbert Spencer, the greater than Francis Verulam, has exhaustively applied the principles involved, to the wide domains of sociology, political and moral economy and the whole history of the human race.

The complicated arrangements of organisms in the world's Fauna and Flora, in groups within groups, resembling each other at the bottom of the scale and varying most widely at the top, all confirm the presupposed theory of Darwin, of "descent with modification," and are inexplicable on any other theory, while the facts found in the embryonic elements of organisms agree with all the facts of classification, and signify that the various forms of organic life have arisen by gradual digression from common originals. If they do not signify this, the phenomena of nature then have no rational meaning whatever, and it is in vain that we explore them. The finest confirmation and most abundant proof of the Darwinian theory have been furnished by a distinguished American savant. The arguments against the Dar-

winian views, formerly urged on the ground of the absence of links between living and defunct species, could only then be met by the apology for the fragmentary character of the geological record which had, presumably, as yet revealed only one osseous form out of thousands. But these arguments have been completely overcome by Professor Marsh's discoveries of the descent of the highly specialised horse through a perfect series, from the *echippus* in the lower eocene, through the *orohippus* in the upper eocene, with four complete toes on the fore-foot, the *mesohippus* of the lower miocene with a splint bone in place of a disappeared toe, the *miolhippus* of the upper miocene, with only three well developed toes, the *protophippus* of the lower pliocene, and still further up in the scale, the *pliohippus* in the upper pliocene, with a hoof almost like that of the modern horse.

It may be confidently asserted that the scientific public of the day, its journals, and all its members, with less than a half dozen trifling exceptions, have adopted and taken to their hearts the whole Darwinian theory as the only one capable of explaining the facts of the universe. The few sceptics who have had any scientific training and still recalcitrate "while the lamp holds out to burn," are influenced by theological or metaphysical objections, which, of course, are irrelevant in a pure question of science. It is manifest now that this great truth, for the triumphant establishment of which only one link is wanting—a link not really needed to complete the chain of evidence—will finally prevail, in spite of the mistaken theological opposition to it, which will in the end, after fruitless contention, succumb and accept, as it has in every previous encounter with scientific achievements gracefully, if tardily, yielded.*

We have not reached the consummation of all knowledge by scientific discovery, and the field to be opened is yet immense, but the inspired genius of God's latest and most perfect creature, with its developed reason, has now lifted the veil, explored the arcana of the universe, unearthed its secrets and solved many of its problems. At last the long hoped for and final reconciliation

* Since the above was written an apt instance has occurred of swift retribution to the temerity which occasionally spurs the mind uninstructed in scientific methods of deduction, to "rush in" to that controversial arena, foreign to its province, which even "angels fear to tread." The Hon. William Gladstone, leaving the domain of Parliamentary tactics and rhetoric, in which he is "*facile princeps*," has ventured to chop logic with the veterans of natural history, and to attack the work of an eminent scientist and divine, Mr. Reville's "*Prolégomènes de l'Histoire des Religions*," recently translated under Max Muller's auspices. It is almost pitiful to read Professor Huxley's late reply to Gladstone's jejune criticisms. The silver-tongued statesman should be struck so dumb by this defense of the truth as to be ever hereafter inarticulate about matters of science.

between science and religion is dawning upon us as a probable result of pure scientific study. Herbert Spencer has proven that the law of universal evolution is a necessary consequence of "the persistence of force." To use the language of John Fiske, "it has shown us that all the myriad phenomena of the universe, all its weird and subtle changes in all their minuteness from moment to moment, in all their vastness from age to age, are the manifestations of a single animating principle that is both infinite and eternal."

The doctrine of evolution asserts as a scientific truth, that there exists a power to which no limit of time or space is conceivable, and that all the phenomena of the universe, whether physical or psychic, are manifestations of this eternal and infinite power. A prose poet has called the universe "the star-domed city," and reminded us that "God's glory beams through every crystal and grass-blade." This language of poetry describes and means exactly and only what the dry scientific terms of the evolutionist mean when he speaks of the "unknowable."

So, through these now confirmed speculations, we have attained a grander as well as more rational view of the glory and work of the Creator, "the infinite power that makes for righteousness," as well as a truer knowledge of man's relations to his Maker, to his fellow-men, and other fellow-creatures. We are at last placed in possession of the knowledge of a universal system and a beneficent order of things that comports with the progress of our own intellects. The stars and the earth, its plants and animals, their exhumed remains, the growth of man, the development of his language, his social and public life, all these tell the same story, soon to be the new creed of every free and thinking person. I am not optimist enough to believe that the time is near at hand when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, universal peace prevail, the brotherhood of man be established, kindness to our fellow-animals be the custom, war and contention cease, poverty pass away, crime and violence be at an end. But I do believe that the recent triumphs of science, their application to the industrial arts, higher views of God's sovereignty and government, are now and further will be, elevating and modifying the masses, who did not before think, read, or observe; that they do and will, in a geometrical ratio, multiply the intellectual cravings and acquirements of all classes of men, satisfy more perfectly material wants, elevate the moral character of our race, and finally help to establish that general concord of the peoples, that "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards man," which Christ taught, and which constitutes the true "religion or binding together," whatever desirable tribular, conventional, or local forms the religion may assume.

And what has all this to do with medicine or with any medical subject-matter of such a discourse as I have been invited to give before a body of medical men? Much! We, as professedly men of science, are deeply interested in the progress of all knowledge, and as humane men and instructors of our fellows in all that concerns their bodily and mental welfare, should be solicitous that our environment be one of advance, culture, and breadth in all that relates to our calling. Our profession is founded upon the sciences of anatomy, human and comparative, of physiology and the laws of our being pertaining to it, and of chemistry, which has introduced and developed most of our therapeutic resources.

Fifty years ago, while our profession was a beneficent and honored one, had attained to much and was illustrious from its numbers of earnest and distinguished workers, it was a vocation, an art, but scarcely a science. Since those days, stepping more than equally with the progress of general science and of the theories and facts we have been considering, not only with strides but with leaps, has our department of knowledge bounded on and upwards, and vaulted to an eminence never before climbed or aspired to. From this "coigne of vantage," we, who occupy it, can proudly survey the surrounding heights of other provinces and claim, at least, an equal altitude. We have at last a science, an aggregation of sciences, not perfected—for when will any human work be perfected until the seal of the end of time is stamped upon it?—but one in the front rank and sharing in eminence with other sections of science.

The study of biology, upon which our present physiological knowledge is based, may be considered to have only commenced in 1839, when the cell doctrines of Schwann and Schlieden were first announced, and the former expressed the important generalization that nucleated cells are the basis of all animal and vegetable structures. I first heard of this only in 1842, when the distinguished Samuel Jackson, of the University of Pennsylvania, who had formerly been content to teach the old, crude, simple physiology, described to his classes, with eloquent and contagious enthusiasm, the wonders of the new doctrine. It was only in 1846 that Morton introduced anæsthesia by ether—although, with fair arguments, an American predecessor in this discovery is claimed—and in 1847 that Sir James Simpson introduced that, by the previously discovered chloroform. What an advance there has been, since those days in the '40's, in our whole line of battle against disease and death, and how the ranks of the line have been recruited, and how rapidly the recruits have become veterans! It would be out of keeping to take up your time with a detailed description of what we all equally know, of what has been done in physiology, surgery, and medicine, during the last

forty years, most of it in the last twenty years, and the greater part of this in the last ten. The youngest of our members, who have graduated during the last five years, if properly instructed, have memorized concrete facts which we, the elders of the profession, have been compelled to learn separately and in rapid succession.

Perhaps, however, I may be allowed to render in a hasty account-current, a list of the most important of the triumphs of these latter days of achievement. We have to record an immense advance in physiology and the knowledge of structure and functions of the various organs and tissues, both healthy and morbid; the perfection of microscopic observation, and localization of the different cerebral powers; ætiological advance, particularly by the discovery of the bacterial origin of numerous diseases, through the researches of Pasteur, Koch, and others; improved methods and instruments of research and diagnosis by the stethoscope, microscope, chemical reagents, æsthesiometer, thermometer, sphygmograph, laryngoscope, ophthalmoscope, otoscope, endoscope, electric light, and galvanic current; the advance in hygienic knowledge, preventive medicine, antiseptic surgery, and improvement of antiseptic and antibacterial agents, such as carbolic and boracic acids, ozone, thymol, iodoform, and chloral; and last and best, corrosive sublimate, hydronaphthol, and potassio-mercuric-iodide; and not only of ordinary and effective germicides, but of the novel, and perhaps practical, methods of fighting fire by fire, of employing a colony of harmless microbes to extirpate a tribe of noxious ones.

Then in surgery, we have resection, exsection, and reunion of bones; new operations for hernia, litholopaxy, laparotomy in its various modes; section of stomach and pylorus; cholecystotomy, removal of the kidneys, Battey's operation, tracheloraphy, skin-grafting, mechanical treatment of spinal curvatures and of all contractions and deformities, removal of growths by electric cautery, and of bony tumors by the surgical engine; the antiseptic treatment of wounds before referred to; aspiration, and a multitude of improved methods and instruments too numerous to catalogue. Besides all of these have been the universal adoption of general anæsthesia and of local anæsthesia by the ether or rhigolene spray, and last and best of all, by the wonderful cocaine and theine. We have also improved ophthalmic, aural, nasal, pharyngeal, laryngeal, and dermatological procedures, and perfected obstetric and gynecologic methods.

When we come to our new therapeutic resources, one's breath is fairly taken away, and mental dyspnœa produced by repeating or listening to the enumeration of the now accepted novelties. We have the various methods of securing improved nutrition and

multitudes of artificial foods; forced feeding by the syphon and enema, the rest cure and massage, faradization, the constant current and static electricity; air, steam and water baths and douches, new methods of applying heat and cold; inhalations, sprays and medicated and mineral waters without number, and beyond all, the practice of hypodermatic medication.

When we descend to mere drugs, we who know, do not concur with those rare transcendent doubters who affirm that no remedies of value, save the bromides, have been discovered of late. These men must long since have taken the oath "never to alter the established practice of physic."

It is reported that the great Sydenham asserted that he could carry the entire pharmacy of his time in the huge pouncet-box at the head of his cane. We can literally do better than this, and with our concentrated remedies, transport in a pocket-book means sufficient to meet most professional exigencies. But "the fathers" could not have conceived of the multitude or the potency of the contents of our present repertory.

What can we, who have profited by and triumphed over their success, say sufficiently in laudation of the efficacy of chloral, croton-chloral, paraldehyde, cocaine, theine, fuchsin, caffeine, pilocarpine, eserine, picrotoxine, physostigma, apomorphia, hyoscine, antipyrine, resorcin, salicine, salicylic acid, terpine, the oleates, nitro-glycerine, and amyl; of veratrum, gelsemium, viburnum, collinsonia, hamamelis, leptandra, iris, hydrastis, phyto-lacca, baptisia, viscum album, piscidia, convallaria, adonis, cactus, helonias, aletris, stigmata-maidis, grindelia, yerba-santa, and particularly cascara; and of an army of other potent remedies, many of them the products of our indigenous Flora, and introduced by the genius and energy of our own countrymen?

Our therapeutic resources are now so immense as to be even a source of embarrassment. To meet the same indications we are often at a loss which one of many appropriate medicines to apply, and when in doubt as to the choice of one of two apt remedies in a given case, might sometimes well exclaim, "how happy I could be with either, were t'other foul taster away."

There is not an atom of truth in the charges common among the vulgar, and offensively hinted about by the exponents of the several sects in medicine, that we are "old-school physicians," *laudatores temporis acti*, and ignorant of, or indisposed to examine or accept, new methods or new remedies. The charge is equally false with the ludicrous one which gives us, from a certain sect, the title of "Allopaths," than which none could be more absurdly inapplicable. Whatever some of our predecessors may have been, or rare exceptions among us may be now, we who rejoice in the title of "Regular Practitioners" are, as a body, cultivated, free, ambitious and aspiring medical seekers after the truth, with

the single and conscientious desire to perfect ourselves in the knowledge of nature's laws involved in our calling, and to extend our experience of these, for the benefit of the suffering part of our race. Endeavoring to free ourselves from the superstitious observance of time-honored precepts or conventional rules, our researches, our theories, our practices, are as broad as the universe, and as all-embracing as are our sympathies with human sorrow. Tied down to no formula or exacting determinate modes, bound by no edict to practice in conformity with any prescribed system, or to march under the flaunting banner of any dogma, not alarmed by calumnious aspersions of either orthodoxy or heresy, we are ready to examine and test any and every theory and remedy, and are not too proud to adopt any contributions proving acceptable from our homœopathic or eclectic brethren, or even from the herbarium of the *sage femme* or Indian doctor, and we are willing to admit that there is no system, however empirical, from which we may and do not cull something of value. We are exploring every field, even if we gather sometimes more brambles and thistles than flowers. We dig into the bowels of the earth, dive into ocean's depths, soar into the air, and make use of all the discovered forces and substances of nature, in search of remedies. Our motto is, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good;" and we are, in a word, of all others in this age of science and ideas, the most active exponents of search for novelty, of experiment, of analysis and observation, as well as of induction and cautious reasoning. We have now means and remedies capable of controlling all the remediable morbid conditions of the human frame, and considering the recondite nature of the principle of life, the transcendent and inexplicable mysteries of many parts of our organization, the obscurity of many diseases, and the diversity of constitution in and reception of remedies by different patients, the success of modern medicine in the hands of cultivated practitioners is a matter for marvel, and is nearly all that we can desire.

Mainly because of improved medical methods and the sanitation introduced by our profession during the last half century, the mean duration of male life has been increased by two years, and of female, by three-and-a-half. It would seem from this, that the doctor, always the tender friend of woman, had been more careful of her interests than of those of her ruder half.

We are yet human and far from faultless. Among us, as in other callings, tribal and individual peculiarities and prejudices assert themselves. There are still among some of our number, tendencies to be too conservative, to adhere to the older methods, to glide smoothly along in the beaten tracks. Another and a larger fraction of our body may be too enthusiastic and emotional

and inclined to indulge in the medical crazes of the day, which have their rise and then their eclipse. Among the latter I would class the excessive use of the tracheloraphic operation, Battey's operation, and other surgical novelties which have been found to be required less often than originally supposed, and to be capable of substitution by milder methods. So, in therapeutics, many once vaunted remedies are now in their decadence.

But failing these, whether surgical procedures or new remedies, the lapse of time will always separate the wheat from the chaff. Progress is the order of the day, conservatism and caution only its brakes. "*Cavendo tutus*," is sometimes a cowardly maxim. It is better to go forward too fast even with danger of collision or running off the track, than to jog and rumble slowly over the ruts. One impediment in the way of our therapeutic advance has been the conservatism of some of our leaders, who fearing that their sanction of new remedies might appear to confirm the views of specific sects, or forward the interests of certain able and adventurous pharmacists, have continued in spite of general medical sentiment, to refuse to notice or give credit to some of the proven most efficient remedies of the age.

Lofty as is our general standard of cultivated good sense, we are compelled to admit the existence, in our ranks as in others, of odd and exceptional characters with fantastic idiosyncrasies and perverted instincts. Some of these only see through glasses darkly, or are merely myopic; others are mentally color-blind, or are abnormally astigmatic and can only see and define certain lines out of many in any *radiating* question. When a number of these who have the same perversion of vision, aggregate and agree as occasionally happens, a harmless individual defect becomes, by multiplication, a mob of delusions, sometimes dangerous to the peace and welfare of the community. Of such origin and character are the obstructions now attempted to be piled up in the path of scientific physiology and therapeutics, by the affectation of morbid sensibility or by the obstinate prejudice of those who seek to oppose extreme legislative barriers to vivisection. Tenderness to our kin of all races and degrees, should be the outcome of advanced knowledge, but he is an enemy of his kind who would place impediments in the way of those carefully guarded and gently managed experiments, performed by and only by scientific experts, upon the short-lived lower animals, which have been most important factors in developing our science and in giving us our present power of relieving human and other animal suffering.

The other *cranks* who still oppose vaccination, but who yet may be found in our profession in Great Britain, possibly here, are fortunately too insignificant in number and character to require notice.

What little of all such retrogressive and retarding influences as continues to linger in and to hamper our profession is, however, now yielding before the general enlightenment of our members, and we can almost see the break of the day when there will be no medical sects, when peace and good-will will prevail, the strict interpretation of artificial and cast-iron codes be no longer enforced, and all our tribes be united with one common aim, each individual's conscience and appreciation of *esprit de corps* being permitted to be a law unto himself. In this one respect we may, in time, be led to retrograde judiciously under the influence and after the example of the older communities of Europe, among whose medical associations such restrictions as prevail with us are unknown.

The credulity and superstition which among the masses have survived from the days of villainage, still exist in our public to so great a degree that the most erudite and skilful physician cannot yet always compete with the charlatan. The multitude love mystery and display and prefer the notority-seeking pretender to the cultivated physician, who modestly pursues the even tenor of his way. But the time is fast approaching when this uninformed public, compelled by its surrounding atmosphere of learning, will accord to the scientific doctor the appreciation he merits and now receives from the discerning few. In that utopian time, the law of the survival of the fittest will surely be asserted and then, as is partially the case now, only the most alert, the best equipped, most studious, apt, conscientious, pains-taking and practical of us will survive and win the goal of success.

I learn that some of you have expected me to discourse to-night upon the history of our Luzerne County Medical Society. If I commenced this talk with any such intention, it may well be charged that I have forgotten my chief topic, and have rambled off into a general and diffuse colloquy "*de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*." You may attribute this if you please, to the garrulity of age and a tendency to mental wandering. Some of you may, moreover, think that I have too audibly "talked right out in meeting."

It is a scandal against the fair sex that their postscripts are the most important parts of their letters. At the risk of being accused of feminine weakness, I will try to make this postscript important, but fortunately for your increasing weariness, will make it brief. Professedly and by "a legal fiction"—and I don't know why the lawyers should monopolise all the fictions—we celebrate to-night by an antedating of nearly three months, the twenty-fifth year of the genesis of the Luzerne County Medical Society. I could, if I would, tell you just how this unlicked cub of a society came into the world. But parents do not always care to tell the family

progeny all about the latter's paternity, and there have been some missing links here which it would perhaps be well not to elaborate upon. I fear that the committee of this body who appointed this feast, had their suspicions that the society was a premature child, and were determined to disgrace its progenitors and publish the fact to the world by compelling the celebration of the anniversary three months before the proper time. Ungrateful children, shame be your portion! We older men have more consideration for the reputation of our patients, and do not publish their lapses. However this may be, we know that our brats were viable and that we have taken good care of them. Have they not, some sixty of them, undergone evolution since their father's time? Some of us, the forefathers were hirsute, almost quadrumanous, and could scarcely talk. "*Circumspice*." Look around this table at to-day's representation of our society and listen to their chatter. What better argument for evolution and development could you have, than from "looking on this picture and on that."

When I first unfurled my banner to the breezes of Wilkes-Barre air and exposed my resplendent shingle to its corroding fogs, twenty-nine years ago, the present large and populous city was a rustic borough of some five thousand population. It was then, as since, the seat of wealth, refinement, and cultivation; the home of the select, distinguished and brilliant men, and of lovely and intellectual women. But it and the beautiful valley of which it was the centre were sequestered spots, simple and primitive, the majority of the inhabitants having little communication with the outside world, and only beginning to have their dreams disturbed by the sounds of hammer and pick, the railroad whistle, and the hum of commercial enterprise. In those early days the characteristics of the professional men of this region partook of the simplicity and lethargy of the main life around them. The medical atmosphere was one of Cimmerian darkness, and the physicians who were supreme in their influence and success had not yet received any of the "divine afflatus" which already permeated the air of medical centers, or become imbued with the modern doctrines then in vogue. There were several younger men of my own age, fresh from the schools, who were all that could be desired and to whom these remarks do not apply. Of the seniors, soon to pass away from the stage of action, there was one brilliant original whose figure and character will never be forgotten by those who knew him. Full of fire, force and eloquence, a poet, an orator of no mean abilities, with great personal magnetism and considerable erudition in classical and general literature, his influence was such that he ruled his patients and the community with a rod of iron and long was sovereign in his medical domain. He had great natural tact and medical instinct, and

if properly instructed he would have become and remained eminent in his profession. But he was a scoffer at and scorner of all innovations, and contended that nothing new had been accomplished in our art since the days of Brown or of John Hunter. His remedies were calomel, quinine, opium, camphor and alcohol, and I doubt if he ever used any others. Soon after my professional entrance upon this field, I was passing his house in the early hours of a lovely summer morning, after having spent a night with a patient whose term of agony had been materially lessened by the use of such instrumental devices as we all occasionally employ. The old doctor, who was sitting on his step, fanning himself, accosted me, and observing some suspicious looking pieces of steel projecting from my pocket, asked me what these were. I exhibited and explained to him the use of the instruments, which he curiously examined, apparently having never seen them before. After pondering for a moment, he exclaimed, with an expressive oath, "young man, for God's sake throw those vile things in the canal, and never more use such abominations. They are the invention of the devil." The "grand old man" died not many years after. I think his heart was broken by the tide of innovation, which he deplored and fought to the last, leaving him stranded high upon the shores. Then there were other pure and capable men who did the best they could with their lights, enjoyed the confidence of the community, and had large followings. One of the most esteemed and successful of these, once, with modest triumph, let me into a secret of his success in obstetric procedure. He attributed this to a method of his own discovery, which he considered worthy of publication, but had not yet mustered courage to place in print. This was that of incising the foetal scalp with scissors, inserting the index between it and the calvarium, and thus forcibly extracting. It is needless to say that this really good man had never owned or seen a forceps. I do not remember having seen his method referred to in print, but I have lately seen the cicatrices left by him upon the now bald heads of several of his victims.

Such were some of the lights of our profession in the early days of this region. Animosities between medical men were rife, and courtesies, professional or social, rare. It became necessary to infuse new life into the calling, and to resublime the medical *caput mortuum*. Some few of us, who thought that we knew more than our elders, put our live heads together and in the ides of March, A. D. 1861, commenced the organization of the Luzerne County Medical Society. It will be remembered that then our county had an immense area, and included in its limits that large territory which, under the name of Lackawanna county, has since seceded from us, to its great gain and our loss. So the

founders, the patriots, the original signers of the declaration of April 17th, 1861, included in their limited number several distinguished physicians of the now great and prosperous city of Scranton, and county of Lackawanna.

The founders of our Society were Doctors Rooney, of Hazleton; Moody, of Lehman; Throop, Ladd, Marr, and Green, of Scranton; Tubbs, of Kingston; Lawton, of Pittston; Cressler and Casselbury, of Conyngham; and Urquhart, Dennis, C. Wagner, E. B. Miner, and myself, of Wilkes-Barre. We were "few and far between," but we were, and have ever since been, increasingly becoming a power in the goodly land we occupy. We and our successors, whom I see around this table to-night, have been fortunate in bringing order out of chaos in all medical matters among us, in unifying the decent and honorable members of our guild in one harmonious whole, in dignifying its character, and in demanding and in securing from the public the appreciation and compensation which we, its members, earn and deserve.

I am to-night filled with gladness that I, one of those who assisted in the inception of this enterprise and important organization, am permitted to join in its quarto-centennial celebration. I am still better pleased to believe that the labor originally committed to a few, has been shared in by so many capable men, well fitted to carry out, elaborate, and improve upon what their predecessors have accomplished. Instead of the fifteen few who laid the foundation, we now have sixty constituents, most of whom are skilled, expert, and enthusiastic members of our society and workers in their profession. Our society has grown not only in numbers, but in strength of purpose, interest in its work, prompt attendance upon more numerous meetings, and value of its contributions to science in learned papers and discussions. We now constitute, not a little, but quite an extensive medical microcosm of our own, able, if our modesty would permit, to be felt as a power in our state and national councils, and are represented by as capable an average of medical men as exist anywhere. We have among us men skilled in diagnosis and original and successful in therapeutics. We have surgeons who perform successfully all the most delicate and important operations, ophthalmologists, aurists, laryngologists and gynecologists who will compare with the best specialists in the cities and who will do as well with their patients, without the exaction from them of inordinate fees. We are as a rule studious, apt to investigate novelties, and in the choice of new remedies in advance of some of the more conservative cities. Our patients often remark to us that when visiting New York and Philadelphia and in need of some accustomed remedy attainable from any pharmacist in Wilkes-Barre, they have explored the town from druggist to druggist, in difficult

search for their need. When they do find what they want, they are usually cautioned by the man of drugs, that this to them long used and familiar remedy, is something very new and rare or dangerous. I only mention this as a straw showing how the wind sometimes blows *from* our direction and not towards it. From the superabundance of our intellectual stores we have been able to permit a drain upon our resources and to give our "sum of more to that which had too much," our great metropolis and medical centre. From our ranks have gone to Philadelphia, the brilliant and gifted ROTHROCK, now an eminent professor and authority in botany, and still later, the discoverer of the analgesic virtues of theine, the acute and learned physiologist, microscopist and experimental therapist, our own genial MAYs.

I could dilate upon such topics as I have presented to-night, for hours. But it is long past "the very witching time of night," and I have ever and anon been hearing your "curses not loud but deep" and your subdued exclamations of "Hold, enough!" Wishing long life, increased membership, usefulness and honor to our own society, I will close by proposing the health of our honored guests, the members of the Lackawanna County Society, our yet beloved daughter who years ago left her then humble home and went to housekeeping in a grander mansion.



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